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The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge, March/April 2010, Vol. 21 Issue 2

The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Cutting Edge

INTRODUCING OUR NEW REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

The staff of *The Cutting Edge* would like to welcome three new regional representatives to the SAFD. Danette Baker will be taking over for Mike Speck in the Middle America region, Travis Sims will be taking over for Robert Hamilton in the Pacific West region, and Matthew Ellis will be taking over for Ann Chandler Harlan in the South West region.

Thanks to Ann, Mike and Robert for their years of service! Your commitment to the betterment of the SAFD and this publication is appreciated and valued beyond words.

Please take a moment to welcome Danette, Matthew and Travis.

- *The Cutting Edge* Staff



Danette Baker
Middle America
Regional Representative



Travis Sims
Pacific West Regional Representative



Matthew Ellis
South West
Regional Representative

THINGS LEARNED IN STAGE COMBAT
BY JOHN BACA

HEY, YOU!
GO TO MY WORKSHOP!

THEN GO TO THIS OTHER WORK-
SHOP!

AND THEN BUY SOME RAFFLE
TICKETS!
AND THIS GOAT!!

WORKSHOP COORDINATORS ARE
SHAMELESS HUCKSTERS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From The Governing Body	Pg. 3
WWW Report	Pg. 4
When the Smoke From the Battle has Cleared	Pg. 6
So You Want to Know About Gun Safety?	Pg. 8
In the Footlight	Pg. 11
Why Gun Fu?	Pg. 12
SPT's/SPR's	Pg. 15
Regional Reports	Pg. 16
Regional Workshop Ads	Pg. 20
Call for Cutting Edge Editors	Pg. 26
Membership Form	Pg. 27

The Society of American Fight Directors



The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword...

Michael Mueller - Editor-in-Chief

It's been a crazy year so far, between the weather and the economy, but the staff of *The Cutting Edge* has been working tirelessly to continue to improve your experience as a SAFD member. We've been tweaking and fine tuning a new web-based system that will fully establish the interactivity of this publication while providing you with more opportunities to share your work, talent, and love for all things stage combat. My hope is to unveil this new look with the May/June issue, however we will only do this if the system is ready and has been thoroughly checked.

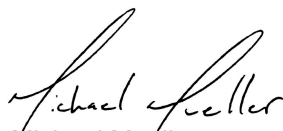
In the mean time, we have another great pdf. issue for you, recapping all that has happened in the organization over the last few months. With the increase of workshops and the excellent efforts of our workshop editor, Dan Granke, we are laying the ground work for the most comprehensive and unique reporting system the SAFD has seen. The goal of Dan's efforts is to take the reporting of these workshops to the next level, combining information from various perspectives with increased coverage through photos, active links to more information and, eventually, video clips.

On the regional front, we have the great privilege to announce three new regional representatives. I would like to thank H. Russ Brown for his hard work in coordinating the smooth transition of the Southwest, Pacific West, and Middle America regions, as well as the Ann, Mike, and Robert for their service over the past few years.

For those of you living in these regions, you should hear from your new reps. soon, but I encourage you to be proactive by sending them a welcome email. In addition to showing your appreciation for the time and effort these new reps. are offering, this simple action will aid them in verifying your information within the regional rep. database. It's a hard job to keep up with all the activities and informational changes that occur within a region. Help them to help you by contacting them with any updates.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Governing Body, Regional Reps., Business Manager, website team, and publications staff. This organization is, and probably always will be, a work in progress; and, implementing change is never easy, especially with an organization comprised of passionate artists. Those who have taken on the challenge of leadership and accepted responsibility for the direction of our organization rarely get the gratitude they deserve. The work you do is invaluable, and I feel that it is important to remind you that your work is appreciated.

I would also entreat the membership to continue to offer patience and diligence in communicating problems as they arise as well as seek out opportunities to assist the organization. Through your feedback, the Governing Body can prioritize and focus on the issues that matter most to you, but volunteering your time and abilities is the best way to help improve the SAFD. As Mahatma Ghandi so wisely said, "be the change you want to see in the world."


Michael Mueller
Editor-In-Chief

Please send all submissions,
comments and questions to:

cuttingedge@safd.org

The Cutting Edge Mission Statement

The Cutting Edge, a bimonthly electronic newsletter written exclusively by and for the membership of the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD), provides its readers with resources to stay involved and always on the cutting edge of stage combat.

Our publication aims to:

- Keep the membership informed about SAFD events, policies, opportunities, membership activities and useful industry information
- Provide the membership with a forum for open discourse
- Welcome new members and engage current members



Editor-in-Chief: Michael Mueller

Associate Editors

Governing Body Liaison: Eero Laine

Layout / Footlight: Katie Mueller

Regional Reports: Darrell Rushton

Regional Workshops: Dan Granke

Governing Body Advisor: John Tovar

The Cutting Edge Submission Deadlines

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2010	Dec. 1, 2009
March / April 2010	Feb. 1, 2010
May / June 2010	April 1, 2010
July / Aug. 2010	June 1, 2010
Sept. / Oct. 2010	Aug. 1, 2010
Nov. / Dec. 2010	Oct. 1, 2010

Regional Reports to Regional Reps.

Issue	Due Date
Jan. / Feb. 2010	Nov. 15, 2009
March / April 2010	Jan. 15, 2010
May / June 2010	Mar. 15, 2010
July / Aug. 2010	May 15, 2010
Sept. / Oct. 2010	July 15, 2010
Nov. / Dec. 2010	Sept. 15, 2010

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From the Governing Body

Geoffrey Kent - President:

Happy 2010. A short note to encourage you to stay tuned to the SAFD website (<http://www.safd.org/>). We are adding new content and features monthly. For 2010 the SAFD accepted staff, scholarship and TCW applications online, speeding up our process and making sure no member was lost in the shuffle. Look for more places to interact with the SAFD online soon. Our CT directory is being tweaked and regional representatives have new Google pages to keep you informed. Keep your email up to date with us as we increase communication on that front as well. I hope to continue to hear from you on your ideas for SAFD growth and improvement as we transition to the online world. What do you want to see on SAFD.org?

John Tovar - Vice President:

If anyone has any questions, comments or concerns, email us. We want to know!

Willie Meybohm - Secretary:

I have nothing to report for this issue.

Lee Soroko - Treasurer:

Dear Members,

Your dollars provide the underpinning in our organizational structure and as Treasurer; I often sound a rallying cry for membership and retention of membership. In the best of all possible worlds (ala Voltaire's *Candide*), this is a seamless process. Unfortunately this was not the case for a number of April and May 2009 new memberships. Instances of delayed paperwork and lack of communication from our end was frankly unacceptable. Please note that these problems have been addressed and rectified, but for purposes of transparency, I wanted to let you all know that this was an issue where appropriate steps and protocols have been taken to avoid this in the future.

That said, should you know of a someone who said they joined the SAFD and not heard from us, please have them contact me or the Secretary immediately so that we can help them. You can also help them by giving them our e-mail address (Treasurer@SAFD.org or Secretary@SAFD.org) and let them know that we need: NAME, NAME OF CT, WHERE they tested and WHEN they joined. If you want to go the extra mile, take a moment and get that information from them first hand and send it on to me, along with their contact information. Together, we can solve issues before they become issues and thus keep within our structure as a "Society".

Richard Ryan - FM Representative:

I have nothing to report for this issue.

Michael J. Johnson- FD Representative:

I have nothing to report for this issue.

DC Wright - CT Representative:

I have nothing to report for this issue.

Mike Speck - AAC/AC/Friend Representative:

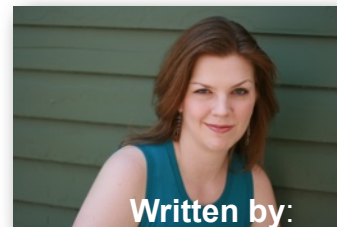
Hello to all Friends, ACs, and AACs of the SAFD! Thanks for your votes and your patience as I adjust to the new role. The AAC/AC/F email list has more than 1,000 addresses on it, which is a truly unwieldy number. Moving forward, I'll be using the SAFD website to rebuild my contact lists using only active members. So make sure that your dues are paid and your contact info/email is updated!

More generally: I've been elected to serve you by representing your views and opinions on the SAFD's Governing Body. If you have any concerns, ideas, questions, complaints, or compliments, please let me know and I'll address/answer/ implement them as best I can!

Thank you again for your (literal) vote of confidence.

Winter Wonderland Workshop

Report 2010



Written by:
Claire Yearman



Jeremy Earl & Mike Speck

Photo by: Travis Sims

This year's Winter Wonderland Workshop was a tremendous success, especially in the face of a struggling economy. As an assistant coordinator, I was pleased that so many students were able to attend the workshop for their first time this year, and I'm additionally pleased that we had so many returning students. 2010 marked the 15th year of the Winter Wonderland Workshop (WWW). The WWW has been fortunate through the years to have had a strong group of dedicated students return year after year, but it's all of the new faces that have allowed the workshop to grow and develop into the workshop it is today. I had multiple students express to me the experiences they had through the workshop, and nothing makes me happier than to hear that a student enjoyed the workshop, learned a lot, and plans to return next year.

This year's workshop had 113 students, 20 teachers, 13 teaching assistants, and 12 interns. Fostering a one to five teacher/student ratio this year, we continued the tradition of offering our students a wide variety of teachers to learn from. Without a doubt everyone was thrilled to meet and take classes from Matthias Fittkau from Stage Combat Germany. Matthias and his assistant Helge Landmesser taught classes in helebard vs. sword & shield and rapier & cloak. It was a wonderful treat to watch Matthias and Helge perform their helebard vs. sword & shield fight as part of our staff fights at the end of the workshop on Sunday. These staff fights consisted of any staff member, from intern to teacher, presenting an original fight from any discipline. Matthias and Helge performed a helebard vs. sword & shield fight that brought the workshop audience to their feet. A few of the other staff fights included a scrappy unarmed fight performed by Fight Master k. Jenny Jones and AAC Chris Duval, a smallsword fight by FD Ian Rose and AAC Adam Noble, and no one could forget Maestro David Boushey giving assistant coordinator and AAC Greg Poljacik a few good stomach punches.

In addition to the yearly raffle, Maestro David Boushey held a special auction to benefit the relief efforts in Haiti. He auctioned off three lots of original *Fight Masters* and *Fight Directors*, the oldest *Fight Master* in one of the lots was the second issue ever produced. Some of the issues were also autographed by Maestro Boushey and other famous fight directors such as Maestro J. Allen Suddeth. We also held our annual raffle, which had 34 possible prizes including multiple workshop tuitions, a dagger and three swords. Proceeds from this raffle were donated to Season of Concern, which benefits the Chicago and Midwestern theatre community in their fight against HIV.

This year a mentoring program was also coordinated for all of the teaching assistants. They were matched with a CT, FD, or FM who watched and reviewed their classes and gave them feedback. AAC, Chris Elst said: "The teaching assistant program, which I think was birthed at a WWW, is a great way to bridge the gap from AAC to CT. I received excellent notes from my mentor, Brian, from the TA Coordinator, DC, and from my fellow TAs. It's good to know that the camaraderie remains strong from your first class as a student to your first as an instructor."

Every year presents new challenges and throughout the year John, Greg, Adam and I are always discussing ideas for the following year. Coordinator and CT John Tovar said: "The WWW had a lot of internal growth this year. While students and guest staff may not directly see the fruits of our labor, the streamlining we have accomplished will positively affect everyone's experience in years to come. Solidifying the administrative aspects now allow us to focus our efforts on implementing new ideas. A lot of changes will be happening - from revamping the website, to bringing in more instructors from around the world - we are dedicated to improving the overall experience of everyone involved. These efforts will continue to put the WWW on the forefront of stage combat training at the regional level."



Darrell Rushton, Paul Dennhardt &
Photo by: Craig Lawrence

The first regional workshop I attended was the Winter Wonderland Workshop in 2005. For that and many reasons the workshop holds a very important place in my heart. When John asked me if I was interested in being an assistant coordinator after the 2007 Winter Wonderland Workshop I was thrilled. I'm very excited about my opportunity to help create that same wonderful experience for so many people every year. Nothing makes me happier than to hear a student say "I really enjoyed the workshop and plan on coming back next year", or from a faculty member, CT Adam McLean, "One of the most smoothly run theatre workshop/conferences, within or outside the SAFD, I have ever had the pleasure of being a part . . ." I look forward to seeing you all next year.



Adam McLean, Christina Traister

Photo by: Craig Lawrence



Adam Noble, Cara Rowlings

Photo by: Dorte Jensen



Paul Dennhardt & Darrell Rushton

Photo by: Craig Lawrence



Christina Traister

David Wooley &

Photo by Sarah Hodges

It's That Time Again . . .

Did you renew your membership? If not, there's still time! Just visit the SAFD website to safely and securely pay your dues via the Internet:

<http://www.safd.org/membership-renewals>

You can also fill out the membership application located on page 29 of this publication, make out your check to SAFD and mail to:

Society of American Fight Directors
1350 E. Flamingo Road, #25, Las Vegas, NV 89119

Membership renewals for 2010 were due by January 1, 2010!

Correction March 5, 2010: Photo credit for the lower right photo was incorrectly given to Travis Sims.

When the Smoke from the Battle Has Cleared



By:
T. Fulton Burns

I can recall the time that followed my first national workshop. All of the excitement of new friends and new skills still went through me like a child on Christmas morning considering all of the possibilities of fun with my new toys. I thoroughly enjoyed having my college friends ask me to show them what I had learned. Eventually I was approached by a former professor to choreograph the fights for a production of *Hamlet* at my undergraduate program. With excitement and great pride I happily accepted.

As I began to process the choreographic needs for this show I started to realize both what I had learned and, perhaps more importantly, what I had not learned. Only a handful of theatre artists and instructors have ever expressed to me the importance of looking back at my work in order to improve. The best example for me was Professor Blair Beasley, who was a professor and director with his MFA in directing. Blair always said, "If you look back at your work and can't find anything you would change, then this may not be the field for you." While I first felt this applied to my work as a director I now know that this wisdom applies to my entire theatre life.

It is a rare but important tool to learn how to assess one's self and grow. This introspective tool can prove to be a gem for any theatre artist. The following information is intended to help acting students look at their work in stage combat as it follows training and testing.

It Is Written

"What you remember today will eventually be forgotten tomorrow." Self Assessment begins with taking and keeping notes. Don't be fooled by the amount of knowledge that can be stored in our minds, or the lack of retention.

During my first workshop Maestro Dale Girard supplied several hand outs to the class regarding unarmed techniques as they related to what he was teaching. The mistake I made, along with many others in my class, was in thinking that everything that I would need was listed on the sheets. While these sheets are still in a file in my office, and I do reference them often, I also realized that they were not written specifically for me.

I now make it a point to keep a bound journal with me during any class I take. The reason for it being a bound journal, rather than a spiral notebook, is that it holds more value. The more important the investment in the material the less likely I am to lose it. Within this journal the information is always recorded in my own words which I can understand easily. Anything supplied by an instructor supports my training, but with a journal I can keep up with skills and information supplied throughout the class.

Another good idea is to separate the skills acquired from notes received during the process within the same journal. Perhaps a star could represent skills and a check mark for notes but self create a method where all of the information will not blur when you return to it sometime later.

Getting Master Results

The most common way to assess our work involves learning the results of the tests; however, a mistake made by many people is to take the Pass, Not Pass, or Recommended Pass as the only information needed. In fact, only looking at the grade is common in many college students because they only want to know the end result of their work rather than concern themselves with the means for the testing outcome. I truly understand that we want to know the outcome for our work, but it is also important to remember that the results of the test are merely a barometer and not the elements that bring about this reading.

Take advantage of the time when you are sitting down with the adjudicator and find out what they observe. These notes are intended to be objective and are to help the actor combatant grow. Before the post test discussion begins grab your journal and have it ready for any information to be received. Also, when something is unclear, respectfully ask more questions in order to understand how improvements may be made. Remember that many years of experience sits in front of the class regarding professional stage combat, so take advantage of it.

Drop the Apple

The instructor of the class has been there throughout the entire process. It is a great idea to keep up with notes provided by the fight teacher during the training; however, if there is time that follows the training, sit with the instructor and pick their brains. When the test is done the teacher can often provide insight regarding notes given by the

adjudicator. Also, things may come to light during the test that may not have been apparent during the training process. Sit with the teacher, your journal, and an open mind to find out where the training can go from this point.

Hey Buddy!

While some partner relationships are better than others it can be very helpful to receive feedback from a fight partner following the skills test. Try to find a time where thoughts can be expressed between partners regarding the process. Constructive criticism is very important at this meeting. An actor will have a good sense of the level respect held within the partner relationship during rehearsals and tests. If the relationship is strong and respectful, then set time aside and meet.

Still, if the relationship has been problematic, then another assessment may be needed. Take the time to self-assess the process rather than meet with the partner to see where things did not work as well as they could have. Remember that both partners were involved and, while it may seem like the other person was at the helm of many rehearsal problems (and they may have been), still look at how to avoid possible problems in order to create better work environments for the future.

In either case this may help to create a better process for choosing scene partners in the future.

Take a Good Look in the Mirror

At some point take the time to look at the entire process and ask yourself questions regarding all stage combat and scene needs. Consider ideas for the following issues:

- At what level was I able to learn the skills?
- At what pace and understanding did I learn the skills?
- At what pace and understanding was I able to learn the choreography and combine acting techniques?
- Was the chosen scene the best for the skills test at that point and time?
- What can I do to improve scene selection for the future?
- How strong was my understanding of the character and my scene work within the entire context of the story?
- Where could the connection, between the scene and choreography, be improved?
- In what ways could the rehearsal process be better utilized?

Consider any other ideas that may be added to a personal list of self assessing questions. In order to remain positive, when answering these questions, always consider how they can be better as opposed to solely focusing upon the things that went wrong. While everything may not turn out roses we can always improve and continue to strive for greatness.

See the Future

Finally, take time for yourself and process all that has been said and recorded. No matter what the test results, there is room for growth and positive improvement in training and performance. Once the information is gathered take the time and set new goals for your work.

The primary question to answer is - What do I wish to accomplish the next time that I train? The best part about this question is that while the question may remain constant the answer will usually change.

Final Thoughts

As we train we can and should continue to grow and better our art form. While it may seem tough, a Not Pass does not mean that one should stop training but instead be aware that they will need to adjust their process with serious levels of change. For one that has received Recommended Passes it is equally important to remember that this was one test of many and that each performance will be different. Growth is always important since lightning rarely strikes the same place twice. Use the ideas in this piece as you continue to build better and stronger goals in your stage combat training process.

Fulton Burns is an Advanced Actor Combatant and the Director of Acting & Performance at the University of South Alabama's Department of Dramatic Arts

So You Want to Know About Gun Safety?



Reflections on the SAFD Theatrical Firearms Safety Course By Cara Rawlings and Marianne Kubik

When Frostburg State University hosted an SAFD Theatrical Firearms Safety Course last Labor Day weekend, AAC's Cara Rawlings and Marianne Kubik agreed, what better way to spend an American holiday than to check out some guns? So, they drove up to Maryland for the September 5-7 workshop, joining six other participants to learn all about the safe handling of theatrical firearms from CT/FD Scot Mann and his assistant Kelly Martin.

The SAFD Theatrical Firearms Safety Course provides 14 hours of practical training in the safe wrangling of these *pyrotechnic devices*. (You wanna call them guns, don't you? So do we.) The SAFD sanctioned this course to serve our membership's need for safe, controlled and legal handling of theatrical firearms. These courses are currently taught by CT/FD's Geoff Kent and Scot Mann, who both have extensive experience in the use of theatrical firearms for theater and film.

Scot, Geoff and CT Michael Johnson will team up for another course in Theatrical Firearms Safety from May 27-28, as part of the inaugural Tiltin' in the Tetons workshop this Memorial Day weekend. And what better way to spend an American holiday than to... wait we already said that, didn't we?

For those of you interested in taking this two-day course, we thought we'd give you an idea about what to expect. If you work for a professional or university theater and use firearms in productions, this course is a must. There's a lot of information to acquire for their safe handling, and a lot of misinformation out there. This course sets the record straight.

Special thanks to CT Darrell Rushton for organizing the Maryland workshop. As an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Frostburg State University, Darrell also teaches stage combat and serves as faculty advisor for the Savage Mountain Stage Combat Club, a student organization (and sponsor of the event) dedicated to "the safe enactment of theatrical violence."

DAY 1: Split 'em up and lock 'em up

Scot began by introducing how firearms work and the acceptable types of theatrical firearms. Providing all the terminology and gun jargon our brains could handle, he detailed topics such as the safe practice of handling, loading and firing theatrical firearms; storage and backstage procedures, and understanding local police safety requirements. He also covered procedures you might not consider, like why you need to store the blank ammo in a secured lockbox separate from the firearms, up to the moment they're needed onstage.

Cara Rawlings: The workshop was timely! As soon as I returned home, we began rehearsals for a contemporary version of *Othello* directed by Bob McGrath here at Virginia Tech. Certified Teacher and Virginia Tech alumnus Neil Massey came in for a week to choreograph the fights for the show. I continued the work after he left. The updated script called for gun handling and blank-firing weapons. I ultimately staged the final moment when Othello shoots himself in the head with a blank-firing gun. Thank goodness I attended this workshop with Scot.

Marianne Kubik: There's a lot of information to get through, and my head was spinning just a tiny bit. But it's necessary stuff, so I recommend taking lots of notes! Once we got up on our feet to try them out, it all started to fit together, so no more head spinning. (There might have been a little bit of gun spinning, however.)

After we learned how to check, load, chamber and fire the practical blank guns Scot provided, he gave us a lot of practice time to become familiar with them. You want to fire as many rounds as possible to get the hang of each weapon, so a good portion of the course fee is in the ammunition. There's also a lot of wear and tear on these firearms because they're designed *not* to do what a gun is supposed to do. With a lot of moving parts that can get jammed pretty quickly with powder and bits of shell, they don't last as long as, say, a well-forged broadsword. But everyone had the chance to fire as much as we had time for, with enough ammo left for the big "shootout" at the end of Day 2.

CR: I had never handled a firearm before the workshop. We did so much practical drilling with the weapons – loading, firing, unloading – that I felt totally comfortable going out to the local firing range to test the weapons we purchased for *Othello*.

MK: With so many safety issues to remember, it can make you hesitant, but Scot gave us the time to just practice, coaching and correcting us. By the end I'd picked up speed and they all started to feel "right" in my hands, which is both a cool and a scary sensation, when you realize what you're handling.

CR: Yes! I gained incredible respect for the weapon and the protocol crucial to ensure everyone's safety. It is amazing how cavalier actors and crew are about handling stage weapons without realizing the potential for injury. Once I went through the handling information with our stage management and the *Othello* actors, they all gained a new level of professional respect for weapons handling. It was an incredible lesson for young actors cast in the show.

DAY 2: Get out your pencils

Theatrical firearms need to be cleaned often, especially after a lot of firing. So that's where we started our day, giving participants the opportunity for some one-on-one time with each firearm along with an in-depth question and answer session. Practical training resumed, and in the afternoon we were tested on everything we learned. Course requirement involves a written test followed by a practical test where you have to check, load, and unload a revolver and a pistol in front of the instructor.

We all happily passed our tests, earning us SAFD approval of course completion. It's important to remember, as with the eight recognized weapons disciplines, this is not a certification, but the Society's official recognition of skills acquired: "The SAFD recognizes the recipient has completed the SAFD Theatrical Firearms Safety Course and has demonstrated the safe use of firearms in a theatrical setting." This recognition is good for a period of five years.

With required coursework now complete, Scot provided a special treat: a staged film sequence and shootout that involved... count 'em... 21 consecutive shots fired from eight separate firearms on set.

MK: Scot staged a drug bust and got each of us up there as either talent or wranglers. Then we did the whole thing all over again switching sides. We got to practice the whole procedure with all the jargon, from "Guns entering set!" to "Going hot!" and when to hand them off to the talent (who shouldn't be trusted with them for long!).

CR: That was so much fun! I got to play a tough DEA agent on a drug bust.

MK: I got to roll over a table with a rubber gun, hand it off to a wrangler in exchange for a loaded and locked practical blank, and return on camera in time to fire.

CR: And the process of setting the firing order was intense!

MK: The first group did okay when we filmed, I think we had one jam. But the second group used the same weapons, which hadn't been cleaned between takes. After firing off about 10 rounds, the semi-autos were already getting jammed, and we had to keep holding to reset. It was a good practical lesson in the abuse these guns take with just a small amount of firing.

CR: I had a blast – please excuse the bad pun – learning about the weapons and handling them, but I really found satisfaction in cleaning the guns at the end of the day! O.C.D. – party of one!! My gun was shiny!!

DAY 3: Instructor Day

The course is only two days, but a few of us were invited to sit in on an additional day of Instructor Training designed to prepare SAFD Certified Teachers to teach this course. Scot let us participate along with Darrell and CT Robb Hunter, and training included practice in demonstrating everything we'd learned over the weekend.

CR: Talk about trial by fire! After observing Darrell and Robb, Scot asked me to walk through the process of loading an unloading a weapon as if I were teaching it.

MK: All I can say is: thank-you for going first! It's one thing to learn all this stuff, and then when you have to stand in front of a group who's "pretending" not to know the stuff you know they all know, it's a brain trip. There are so many details, and the whole time you've got to remember not to point that weapon in the direction of its firing lane (from Scot: "Always know the trajectories of your brass, gas and wadding.") But, with only a little bit of collegial hazing (thanks, Darrell and Robb!), we both made it through okay.

CR: Actually, the opportunity to "teach" how to handle the weapon helped reinforce the knowledge I gained in the workshop. The fact that I was called on to apply that knowledge so soon after taking the workshop proved that my holiday weekend was well spent. I have since recommended the class to students training as actors, stage managers and prop masters. The class is a great addition to the SAFD curriculum! Thanks again to Scot, Kelly, Darrell and all my classmates! And thanks to Marianne for driving!

Join the SAFD for the next Theatrical Firearms Safety course. This will be a two-day course, May 27–28 as part of the Tiltin' in the Tetons workshop, or TILT. For more information on the TILT, contact workshop Coordinator Michael Johnson at jjohnsonmichael@ymail.com.

High School Students ages 15-19 can join Darrell Rushton June 20-26 at Frostburg State for the Savage Mountain Stage Combat Workshop. For more information, go to www.frostburg.edu/savagemtn/index.htm.

To view the footage from the "shootout" go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtvKV9onMTc>



Jenny Male, Ben Arden, Mark Bowling and Cara Rawlings practice loading and unloading revolvers.
Photo by: Scot Mann



Sunday Morning Cleaning! (from L to R) Cara, Jenny, Wolf Sherrill, Marianne Kubik and Kelly Martin clean the residue from the previous day.
Photo by: Scot Mann

SAFD

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS



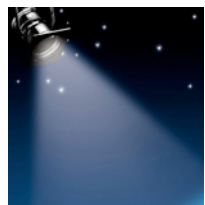
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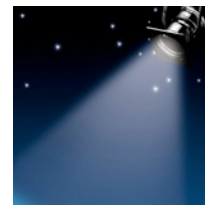


www.companycasuals.com/SAFD



In The Footlight

With: T.Fulton Burns



If you are interested in being featured or would like to nominate another member, please contact Layout Editor, Katie Mueller - Perchance2dream6@aol.com



SAFD: Could you please describe your most rewarding involvement with staged violence?

TFB: This is honestly a tough question. There is one particular experience though that I'll not soon forget. It was the summer I interned in Las Vegas and Brian Byrnes challenged my single sword scene. He knew that I had settled into one way of performing the role and he

presented several different approaches. I rejected his ideas at first because I just wanted to pass the test and get that weapon on my list (what would eventually be all eight.) Luckily for me, I eventually saw the benefit of what he offered. The rewarding involvement was two fold: it was one of my favorite performances of any role I have ever done and I received my very first Examiner's Award for Excellence. Because of Brian's constant challenges I honestly feel a great sense of pride in my work and I now try to incorporate Brian's ideas as I teach acting.

SAFD: Have you found any particular style of movement training to be more beneficial to those involved in stage violence (ex. a particular martial arts, etc.)?

TFB: I am trained as a dancer so that form of movement always influences me in every aspect of what we do. For processing fights it is the training I had in aikido but I honestly think any form of martial arts is helpful to understanding our work. Also, I can't help but think that any form of movement training would be beneficial in stage violence.

SAFD: When working on a scene, what elements do you consider paramount in a partner?

TFB: Respect is the element that I consider paramount in a partner and this includes the respect of time spent, artistic ideas, and most importantly the respect for safety.

SAFD: Why did you become a member of the SAFD?

TFB: I was afraid that if I didn't become a member Mike Chin would hurt me and I wouldn't make it home from Las Vegas alive! I know it is cliché but I honestly believe in the importance of the SAFD, so I joined in 2000 with many of my workshop classmates. I stay with the SAFD because of what it strives to offer in the world of theatre and stage combat. One of its goals is to improve the world of theatre and that is why I think what the SAFD does matters.

SAFD: What do you love about the SAFD?

TFB: My friends! I tell my students how important it is to make strong connections in the world of theatre. The

SAFD has provided me with many great connections both personal and professional, and I keep in touch with them constantly.

SAFD: Where do you see yourself within the Society in five years?

TFB: I have applied for the TCW in 2010 with the hope of becoming a Certified Teacher with the SAFD. This has been a goal of mine for quite some time and even it played a part when I was considering my graduate school options. Another goal I have in my SAFD membership is that I intend to write a book showcasing important issues regarding acting and how these issues relate to our stage combat work specifically. I want to be able to give back to the organization that I feel has given so much to me.

SAFD: What is your favorite film involving violence? Why?

TFB: *The Prisoner of Zenda* tops my list! I love the art of acting and clear objectives performed by the actors for their audience. The final fight scene between Rupert and Rassendyll is one that I feel should be used for teaching stage combat at any university. The clear objectives, tactics, and obstacles between the two characters is such a breath of fresh air compared to most final face offs. How they use the choreography to relay their goals is exciting and I just love it!

SAFD: If the SAFD were to add another weapon form, what should it be and why?

TFB: I would like to see skills tests that are geared towards mixed weapons. This idea would mean that the performers would not only have to understand the moves and psychology of the weapon they are wielding but also the weapons held by their opponent. With mixed weapons we would increase the understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of those weapons we are holding and their relation to these weapons to which we are matched. The greater understanding of the weapons would also benefit the instructor's teaching and the preparation of the skills tests. I believe that the opportunity for all of us to grow in this field is important and a mixed weapons-SPT could contribute to this growth.

SAFD: What is in your pockets right now?

TFB: Among the standard loose change and wallet, I have in my pocket a fortune from a cookie which reads "Remember three months from this date. Good things are in store for you." It always stays in my wallet even though I don't recall when I got that fortune, so either that date has passed or it is still on its way. Personally, I like to think that I haven't reached that date yet and that good things are always in store for me.



By: Craig Lawrence

Why Gun Fu?

Building & Developing a Workshop Class

A friend and mentor of mine once told me you are ready to be a teacher when you stop just teaching as you've been taught; when you figure out your own way of presenting the information you have gained mastery over. I've taken enough classes with Darrell Rushton, Lewis Shaw and Robb Hunter that I could certainly do an imitation of the way they taught me, and I'm sure it would work out pretty well. To really master the material, you've got to grow beyond that repetition. The ultimate goal is not only to develop your own teaching style, but also to create original teaching material. About two years ago I decided it was time to roll up my sleeves and make that happen.

I'd been teaching combat technique for several years, both as an independent study at Frostburg State University and in the Washington, D.C. metro area and I felt pretty comfortable with it. I spent a lot of time assisting Robb Hunter in his SPT classes as well as working with various high schools and theater groups, where I learned how to present material and manage a classroom. These skills were not my concern. My worry was that I was simply presenting information as it had been presented to me; that I was merely a parrot for Darrell's, Lewis' or Robb's skill sets. I worked hard to figure out what made sense to me and discover new ways to present the material, but I felt there was more I could do. Then it occurred to me: I should teach something that, to my knowledge, *had never been taught* (I am nothing if not full of crazy concepts). So I began brewing ideas.

What hasn't been taught yet? If you check up on the classes at various regional workshops, you'll see that almost everything under the sun has a class devoted to it. With topics like Roman Battle Tactics, Crate Hook, Fashions of Chan and Lightsaber, we've run the gamut from the meticulously historical to the fantastically comic. Where else can we go? What corners of the fight and movement world have not yet been explored? I decided to figure this out and make a workshop class.

From this exploration came my baby, my class to teach: Gun Fu. I wanted to teach a class on the techniques and style of action films from the past decade. This style spoke to me; it was something I loved and felt passionate about . . . and it had never been taught to me. My journey to Gun Fu can be broken down in to 4 steps.

Step 1) Hone your topic

What do you want to teach? And not only that, but what parts of it do you NOT want to teach? No matter what topic you pick, you will quickly discover that it's too big. The realization that you can't possibly teach everything about your chosen topic in one 90 minute class will hit you like a truck. Much like a sculptor has to remove excess rock to form his creation, so must you choose what must be discarded from your topic.

So what would Gun Fu not be? It would not be a class on gun disarms, or proper firearm safety. We have those, and those are different things. "Two characters fight over a single gun." I've seen that class. I've taken that class. That was not going to be my class. Are those things valid aspects of the fighting style I intended to describe? Absolutely; but, I had to be specific if I was going to make a workshop class out of this idea.

Great... so what was Gun Fu going to be? What I settled on for a pitch was, "A fantasy combination of unarmed skills and firearm techniques. A style drawn from modern cinema, originating with the Hong Kong cop movies of John Woo." My final product took elements of Unarmed (grappling and martial arts mostly), Knife (blocks, checks, transports and single time violence) and Smallsword (gotta watch that point!) and combined them with some of the highly non-realistic elements seen in this cinematic style. Secure in my goal and with a clear vision in my head, I gathered my wits about me and moved on to . . .

Step 2) Build a database

So, you've got your ideas in your head and your topic is pretty well settled: now just grab people and start teaching them, right? Wrong. The first thing that will happen when you present a new topic is that people who want to challenge it will make themselves known. Be prepared for that. Remember that to teach something well is to have a firm grip on the material. Not only must you understand it in your terms; you must be able to break it down, take it apart, and put it back together in *your student's terms*. You must be able to approach the material from different points of view, for different body types,

and using different vocabularies. In the extras for the movie *Blade: Trinity*, the fight choreographer discusses how each actor had a different set of physical skills they brought to the table. He had to quickly learn which set of terms worked for which actor. This idea has stuck with me throughout every choreographic experience since, and I knew that Gun Fu would be no different. If anything, it would be an even greater challenge, due to its newness and lack of set structure. I had to not only explore this topic on my terms, but on the terms of every potential student.

One of the big questions with Gun Fu was “Is this actually something people do?” After some research, I was surprised to see how much of it I found. As with any good research project, I started with my inspirational material (*Hard Boiled*, *Desperado*, *The Matrix* and *Equilibrium*) and then went directly to Wikipedia because that’s where the masses go to throw their ideas at a new topic. If I was going to present material, I needed to know what was already out there in the collective pop culture awareness. I had to go find, and in some cases create, my own pieces of this puzzle.

Some topics come with readymade material. For example, if you want to teach a class on Angelo Smallsword techniques . . . well, there’s a book for that, several books, actually. There are also a number of SAFD teachers who would be happy to send you in the right direction. My topic, however, did not have readymade material. Few books have been written on the propensity of Hollywood to embrace what is often called the “bullet ballet,” but the material is out there if you know where to look.

Once you’ve refined the concept, start getting some hard evidence. Artwork, film, television shows, anatomy books, acting exercises, metaphysical concepts, philosophical debate, exercise techniques...whatever may apply to the topic you’ve decided to bring to the table. For me, this was the easy part. I had to stand in front of my movie collection and think “Ok, which ones are useful?” That is my primary reference material and what I go back to when a student or colleague raises questions about my topic.

My research into Gun Fu involved a lot of “behind the scenes” DVD extras, and a lot of interviews and articles on and about various action directors (beginning with the Godfather of Gun Fu, John Woo). It covered fan speculations on message boards, and breakdowns from Kurt Wimmer on his “Gun Kata” style (from his films *Equilibrium* and *Ultraviolet*). Most notably, it involved watching a whole lot of movies a whole lot of times, because the techniques are out there. I just had to decipher, break down, and codify them.

Step 3) Fill your toolbox

Wikipedia is, and always will be, a place to start. I highly recommend it for the first ten minutes of any research project. Then, you must walk away. Wikipedia is a springboard to help you gain momentum but, it will not take you on a journey. Explore your idea. Take your time. Frequently ask yourself “Is this too much?” and “Is this enough?” Find the pitfalls in your topic, and know when it stops working. Everything does, sooner or later. Discuss your topic with friends and colleagues. See if your idea makes sense to them; can your passion for the idea inspire them to feel passionate? Can you excite others with your idea? What parts of it seem most interesting to an outsider? What parts seem most confusing?

Great, you’ve got your concepts and you’ve got your backup. Now you need the tools of your trade. What is your class going to need? Think not just in terms of equipment (although this will be a factor. Imagine trying to teach a class that would require 27 baby seals and several gallons of liquid latex) but in terms of *terminology*. How will you present the material? What words will shape your ideas? Is it concept based, movement based, or both? Then you either have to start talking or start moving.

Start building drills. Unless your class is going to be entirely lecture, you’ll need them. Find a buddy and teach them the moves of your class. Build a combination, even if you never intend to use it, then set all that aside and try something else. Give yourself room to run, and then pull yourself in tight. Remember, you’re never 100% sure what kind of space or students you’ll have at any given workshop. Ask yourself, “Where can people get hurt doing this? What are my pitfalls in that realm?” Try to do the combination twice as fast as it should be done, and see where you get hung up. Be safe for you and your partner, obviously, but in my experience, if you want to see where the newbies are going to get hung up, and potentially hurt each other, moving at double speed (but not full strength!) is the way to do it. This is also a great time to get a handle on how difficult your class will be. Is this an “open” experience class? Advanced? A class can be “won” or “lost” based on an accurate assessment of the difficulty level.

Luckily for me, Gun Fu was logistically straightforward. Resin and plastic prop firearms would be the class. A TV with a DVD player, a few of my favorite movies and a short intro lecture on what the hell I was talking about, and I was good to go.

The terminology of the subject was where things got tricky. I had to create a few terms and label a couple of Gun Fu clichés to really make it flow, but hey, if you can’t find it, you make it. For example, my favorite term came from a need to describe when the hero ducks behind cover and strikes the pose shown on page 14.

After much deliberation, I came up with “Listen to your guns,” because that not only gives you the visual, but it conveys the sense of the moment. What will our hero do next? Reload? Wait for the right moment to break cover? Toss these guns and draw a new set? The guns will tell you what to do, just take cover for a second and listen to them.

Step 4) Polish, polish, polish

Any class worth teaching will not be perfect its first time on the track. If your brand new class went smoothly, either you're a phenomenal teacher or you weren't ambitious enough with your material. That's what these workshops are for, right? We're all there to learn something. Never stop learning from your students. Let them guide you. What were they excited about? What bored them? When did you start to lose their interest? When did they start to lose yours? What did they get right away and what took way too much discussion or repetition to sink in?

My first time through Gun Fu, I taught some technique, ran a few drills, talked about a few concepts and set my class loose to explore and come up with their own quick combination. That didn't work for most of them. I learned that first time out that I needed to provide choreography to really give them a feel for the process. I couldn't just show them the path and ask them to run it (not with an "open" experience class, at any rate). I also needed something more to play with. Gun Fu was supposed to be fun. This class wasn't playful enough. So, I added an "intro to gun spinning" portion onto the front. That seemed to move things along nicely. My second and third attempts at Gun Fu were much more lively and exciting.

Three workshops have seen Gun Fu, and I'm a long way from having the formula down. I expect to keep improving and evolving the style and techniques for some time. Honestly, I have so much fun with the topic that I'd keep tinkering with it even if my students insisted that it was perfect. I've even thought about offshoots of the class. Where can this topic go? What is *Gun Fu 2: Reload*? Keep your ears open, because I've already started working on it.

Creating a workshop class isn't straightforward and I certainly do not intend to present you with an exhaustive manual here. I merely hope that by sharing my method, I helped you with whatever ideas you're considering presenting in the future. There is a vast world of ideas out there and the entertainment industry is creating new ones every now and then. New ideas like Gun Fu are created and old ideas like Spear and Shield are brought to the forefront (Thank you *Troy* and *300*). As educators, choreographers and performers, it's our job to not only keep up with the trends, but start new trends of our own. Happy hunting.



Craig Lawrence listening to his guns

Upcoming SPT's/SPR's

Classes:

When: January to March 27, 2010; Saturdays 9am-12pm
Where: Denver Center Theatre Academy
What: STP - UA
CT: Geoffrey Kent
Adjudicator: TBD
Cost: \$225 (+\$35 optional SAFD skills proficiency test fee)
Contact Info: Geoffrey Kent geoffrey@thefightguy.com, 303-446-4892

When: January to May 2010
Where: Willamette University, Salem, Ore.
What: SPTs - SS, S&S, SiS and UA; SPRs as needed
Class Info: M-Th mornings
CT: Jonathan Cole
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: Jonathan Cole, jon@revengearts.com; www.revengearts.com

SPT/SPR:

When: March 11, 2010
Where: Newman Center for the Arts, University of Denver, Denver, Colo.
What: SPT - Single Sword
CT: Geoffrey Kent
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact Info: Geoffrey Kent - geoffrey@thefightguy.com

When: March 26, 2010
Where: Regent University, Virginia Beach, Va.
What SPT - UA, BS, R&D, QS
CT: Michael Kirkland
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact: Michael Kirkland, michhil@regent.edu

When: March 27, 2010
Where: Swordplay Stage Combat, New York, N.Y.
What: SPR - R&D, UA
CT: Joe Travers
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: Joe Travers, swordplay98@hotmail.com, www.swordplaystagecombat.com

When: April 10, 2010
Where: The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film University of Nebraska-Lincoln Lincoln, Neb.
What: SPR - There will be two SPR sessions. Weapons are still to be decided and will respond to requests from interested parties.
CT: Ian Borden, Harris Smith Paul Steger, Michelle Ladd, Aaron Anderson
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact: Ian Borden, iborden2@unl.edu

When: April 26, 2010
Where: Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Mich.
What: SPT - UA
CT: Christina Traister
Adjudicator: Chuck Coyl
Contact: Christina Traister, traimez@msu.edu

When: April 27, 2010
Where: Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.
What: SPT - UA
CT: Christina Traister
Adjudicator: Chuck Coyl
Contact: Christina Traister, traimez@msu.edu

When: May, 2010
Where: Adelphi University, Garden City, N.Y.
What SPT - RD, TBA
CT: Ray Rodriguez
Adjudicator: Michael Chin
Contact: Ray Rodriguez ranthrod66@yahoo.com

When: May, 2010
Where: Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.
What SPT - BS
CT: Michael G.Chin
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer
Contact: Michael G. Chin mikechin@thestagecombat.com

When: May, 2010
Where: Fights4, New York, N.Y.
What SPT - SS
CT: Michael G.Chin
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer
Contact: Michael G. Chin mikechin@thestagecombat.com

When: May, 2010
Where: Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N.Y.
What SPT - UA
CT/FD: Michael G.Chin
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer
Contact: Michael G. Chin mikechin@thestagecombat.com

When: May, 2010
Where: Pace University, New York, N.Y.
What SPT - UA
CT/FD: Michael G.Chin
Adjudicator: Chuck Coyl
Contact: Michael G. Chin mikechin@thestagecombat.com

When: May 7, 2010
Where: Roosevelt University, Chicago, Ill.
What SPT - UA, SiS
CT: Chuck Coyl, Neil Massey
Adjudicator: Mark Guinn
Contact: Chuck Coyl, chuckcoyl@prodigy.net or Neil Massey, n.massey@sbcglobal.net

When: May 8, 2010
Where: Frostburg State University, Frostburg, Md.
What: SPR & SPT - UA, BS, KN
CT: Darrell Rushton
Adjudicator: k. Jenny Jones
Contact: Darrell Rushton dsrushton@frostburg.edu

When: May 12, 2010
Where: Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
What: SPT- UA, BS, R&D
CT: John McFarland
Adjudicator: Drew Fracher
Contact: David Woolley, dwoolley@colum.edu

When: May 13, 2010
Where: Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
What: SPT-SiS, SS, QS
CT: David Woolley
Adjudicator: Drew Fracher
Contact: David Woolley, dwoolley@colum.edu

Regional Reports

A Look At Our Membership Around the World

East Central Region:

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C.



By: Ray Rodriguez
e: ECRegRep@safd.org

This region did not submit a report for this issue.

Great Lakes Region:

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin



By: Jim Stark
e: GLRegRep@safd.org

AAC Stephen James Anderson writes that he is in his final year at The Theatre School at DePaul University working towards his MFA in directing. His thesis production of *The Three Musketeers* performed at the Victory Gardens Greenhouse Downstairs Mainstage space from February 12-21. He was responsible for both the direction and fight

direction. Additionally, he choreographed fights for Red Twist Theatre's production of *The Pillowman*, which was extended for a second time through February.

Friend Mary Shen Barnidge monitors all artistic violence in Chicago and notes that FM Chuck Coyl "did a nice domestic spat (of the kick-over-furniture-and-throw-tchotchkes variety)" for Chicago Shakespeare's *Private Lives*.

CT/FD Jamie Cheatham finished his term as FD Representative this fall. It was a great opportunity to serve during a really eventful administration. Jamie also directed *All My Sons* at UW-Parkside, where he teaches acting, and is prepping *As You Like It* for the spring. He also had fun lending a hand to DC Wright with some slightly rehearsed battles for the "unrehearsed Shakespeare" production of *Macbeth* at KCACTF, Region III.

CT Bruce Cromer finished his fifth year as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park this December; and notes that with his former eight years as Bob Cratchit, he's now delivered thirteen years (or approximately 455 performances) of this Dickens' classic. In January/February of 2010 he played Oliver Lucas in *The Vertical Hour* at the Human Race Theatre Company. He has also started a new Stage Combat class at Wright State University.

AAC Mark Hardiman writes "As part of developing the new theatre program at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, where I am now an Assistant Professor heading up the new theatre program, we hosted CT Neil Massey for an intensive workshop in Broadsword and Shield last semester and began this semester with a visit from FM Drew Fracher conducting a class in Smallsword. Both guest instructors shared their expertise in combat classes as well."

AC Jeff Newman will be performing in *Frindle* at the Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, Mo. April 6-May 16.

AAC Adam Noble recently returned from his yearly pilgrimage to the Winter Wonderland Workshop, where, despite some snow on the ground, he basked in the warm glow of his fight family. At Indiana University Adam recently completed *The Parentheses of Blood*, and is now in rehearsals for *Marat/Sade*, *Take Me Out*, and *Major Barbara*. Adam is also currently in production as action coordinator on a martial arts webisode series. The series, loosely based on Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, is entitled *Student Seven*, and is based in a university setting where Bushido is enforced, and "honor duels" often occur between classes. Adam would like to thank his illustrious fight family, for their ongoing support!

CT/FD Nick Sandys is currently appearing in *My Fair Lady* at The Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire Ill., while his fights are gearing up (in absentia) in the Lookingglass/Centerstage production of *Around The World In 80 Days* at Kansas Rep. Meanwhile, he is choreographing *Extremities*, *Original Recipe*, *A Raisin In The Sun*, *Four Twins*, and a short film at The Theatre School at DePaul, in between teaching BFA2 and SPT classes.

CT Jim Stark just completed fight direction for two medieval comedies at the Hanover College Theatre: *Noah* (Noah's wife throws four big men heels over head) and *The Disobedient Child* (his wife beats him). Still funny after all these centuries.

FM David Woolley is starting the spring semester 2010 at Columbia College of Chicago, with two basic Unarmed and Rapier & Dagger classes and an advanced Smallsword, Single Sword and Quarterstaff class. Fight staging

includes *The Wild Party* and *Dirty Story* at CCC and *A Gulag Mouse* for the Babes With Blades at the Trap Door Theatre. In other news, *Gulag* is the winner of the Margaret Martin Sword and Pen competition, and is written by Arthur M Jolly.

International:



By: Bret Yount
e: IntlRegRep@safd.org

This region did not submit a report for this issue.

Mid-America Region:

Iowa Kansas, Minnesota,
Missouri, Nebraska, North
Dakota, South Dakota



By: Mike Speck
e: MARegRep@safd.org

CT Ian Borden is in preparation for the inaugural Lincoln Assassination, April 10-11 in Lincoln, Neb.

AAC Karla Kash is the head of musical theatre at Drake University, co-coordinated Carnage in the Corn II this November as well as directed/choreographed *Cabaret* at Drake University. Also, Karla fight directed and choreographed *Dead Man's Cell Phone* for StageWest Theatre

Company, where she is currently directing and choreographing *Working*. Karla is happy to announce that she is once again an Advanced Actor Combatant after passing the SPR in Smallsword at Carnage.

AAC David Schneider, recent WWW attendee, renewed his Knife proficiency with a recommended pass and will be choreographing Cromulent Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

AAC Mike Speck interned at the 2010 WWW, where he received a Recommended pass in Smallsword (thanks to CT Adam McLean and AACs Jeremy Earl and Travis Sims). He is continuing his studies in arts administration and project management at St. Mary's University of Minn.

New England Region:

Connecticut, Maine,
Massachusetts, New
Hampshire, Rhode Island,
Vermont



By: Rob Najarian
e: NERegRep@safd.org

Friend Kevin Gall has been keeping pretty busy since joining the SAFD last May. He taught a class on Theatre Special Effects at a summer camp called Exploration, where he passed on some very basic unarmed combat to the little kids, mainly working with them on pain and reactions in addition to punches and slaps. After the summer, Kevin went for a semester abroad in London to study with RADA through New York University. While there he worked with Bret Yount on Broadsword and Knife-fighting techniques. He is now

back in New York City at NYU taking a Rapier-Dagger class with David Brimmer and is set to test in May. Having worked with broadswords, he finds it quite a lot of fun to get back to working with rapiers, particularly enjoying the finesse of the weapon.

AC Meron Langsner continues to work on his dissertation concerning martial arts on the American stage at Tufts University, where this semester he is teaching Intro to Acting with the Drama Department and Exploring Local Performance with the Osher Life Long Learning Institute. He recently signed a contract to have his play, *The Godot Variations*, included in an anthology by Smith & Kraus, and there are performances of his plays scheduled in Boston and Texas. Recent fight directing credits include work at Lyric Stage Company of Boston, Boston Playwrights Theatre, and the Boston Center for the Arts. Meron is also a self defense instructor with IMPACT Boston.

CT/Regional Representative Robert Najarian is just finishing up the extended run of *Sleep No More* with the ART. The show has been an unprecedented success and has been playing sold out shows every night since mid-November. In February and March Rob will be fight directing *Othello* with Actors' Shakespeare Project.

Friend Skye Noel has continued with her fight experience, since testing at the American Repertory Theatre last spring, in small but fun ways. She took a stage combat workshop through The Winner's Circle, a theatre company/cooperative with which she is associated. She has also auditioned for several films involving fight scenes.

AAC Mark Rosenthal has just come home from the WWW, which was amazing. In February, he will be starting rehearsals for the San Diego Opera's production of *Romeo & Juliet* where he will be playing a sword fighter, with performance dates in March.

Northwest Region:

Washington, Alaska, Oregon



By: Heidi Wolf

e: NWRegRep@safd.org

FM Emeritus David Boushey was recently granted the "Distinguished Alumni Award" for 2009 at his alma mater Central Washington University in the college of Arts & Humanities. He graduated from Central in 1969. After 40 years it was well worth the wait! His school (The International Stunt School) is now in preparation for a reality series to be aired in the not-too-distant future.

AAC Kevin Inouye will be assisting with the theatrical track at the upcoming Western Washington WMA workshop in February, and has been helping to arrange Tony Wolf's workshop schedule in Seattle in March. He'll be on set in March for the web series *JourneyQuest*, and is doing some private lessons as well.



Pacific West Region:

California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii



By: Robert Hamilton

e: PWRegRep@safd.org

This region did not submit a report for this issue.

Rocky Mountain Region:

Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming



By: Benaiah Anderson

e: RMRegRep@safd.org

AC Benaiah Anderson is busy assisting a couple of classes with CT/FD Geoffrey Kent, Unarmed and Singlesword. He has just completed choreography for *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* for The University of Northern Colorado and *Bug* for Open Stage. He worked on *Midsummer Night's Dream* and taught a few workshops for Grandview High School, and he returned to teaching at Tara Performing Arts High School, where he is on faculty. He also finished

making a rapier that he is especially proud of and plans to sell for a million dollars...

CT/FD Geoffrey Kent is currently in rehearsal at the Denver Center Theatre Company as actor and fight director for *Eventide* and *Othello*. He has two SPTs in the works, *Single Sword* for the University of Denver and *Unarmed* for the Denver Center Theatre Academy; both test in March. March 27-28 marks the return of the *Rumble in the Rockies* (www.RumbleintheRockies.com).

Upcoming work includes fight direction for the National Theatre Conservatory's *Hamlet* and teaching at a regional workshop in Wyoming for Memorial day. This summer, Geoffrey will return to the Colorado Shakespeare Festival to fight direct and act in their 53rd season: Edmund in *King Lear* Grumio in *Taming of the Shrew* & Simon Stinson in *Our Town*. For more information go to www.thefightguy.com

AAC Terry Kroenung's fight-filled fantasy novel *Brimstone and Lily*, featuring a smart-aleck talking sword, was a finalist at the Colorado Gold Writers' Conference in Denver. His student fight group, Niwot Swashbucklers, performed every SAFD weapon style in a demonstration to accompany the DVD release of *Reclaiming the Blade*. The group now has a YouTube channel. Terry will direct *Much Ado about Nothing* in February complete with a whip-wielding female Don John (sigh no more, ladies!)

AAC Michael Mueller has been working furiously since the New Year. He choreographed his first equity show, *At Home At The Zoo*, for Boise Contemporary Theater and has recently finished choreographing *Othello* for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's outreach tour. Currently, he is working on choreography for *Metamorphoses* for Boise State University and *Romeo and Juliet* for the College of Idaho. Additionally, he is directing a junior high production of *The Merchant of Venice*, teaching improv to sixteen fourth through sixth graders for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and performing with his wife, Katie, in



AAC Michael Mueller demonstrates a knife disarm to actors in a touring production of *Othello*.

Georgia Shakespeare's critically acclaimed production of *Julius Ceasar*, and then travelled to Gainesville State College where he taught a Theatrical Firearms Safety Certification course through the Society of American Fight Directors. Scot and Kelly also co-directed and choreographed *Shakespeare Alive!*, a collection of action-oriented scenes by the

A Salute To Shakespeare with the Boise Philharmonic. Finally, he has accepted the challenge to head up *The Fight Master* in addition to his work on this publication. All this is on top of working full time in the office of the English Department at Boise State University.

South East Region:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia



By: John Cashman
e: SERegRep@safd.org

CT/FD Scot J. Mann

choreographed swordplay and served as movement consultant for The Alliance Theatre Company's production of *A Life in the Theatre*, starring Broadway's Andre De Shields. Then Scot and AC Kelly Martin co-choreographed *Avenue X*, and *Tennis in Nablus* for The Alliance, as well. In addition, they also choreographed violence for

Bard, for Theatre Macon. At Mercer University, Scot directed and sound designed dynamic productions of *An Enemy of the People*, and *The Lucky Spot*, as well as performed and elaborate whip routine entitled "Whip Dance El Loco" with AC Kelly Martin to benefit Mercer Arts for the Cure, a variety show in support of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Scot is presently teaching SPT classes at Gordon College and Mercer University, as well as directing the upcoming show, *Cinders*.

FM Dale Girard continues to direct the stage combat program at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA). Along with his busy teaching schedule, Dale has completed staging the fights for *Picnic*, *Fences*, *Saint Joan*, *Vinegar Tom*, *The Other Side of the Forest* and the musical *Two Gents* for UNCSA, as well as served as Stunt Safety Coordinator for several student film projects and the feature film *The Trial*. He is presently in preproduction for *Romeo and Juliet* for the Arden Theatre (Pa.) and *Romeo et Juliette* for the San Diego Opera (Calif.) and preparing workshops and master classes for the Virginia Beach Bash in Virginia. Around this busy schedule, Dale still continues training in Tae Kwon Do and Hopkido with his sons Matthew (10) and Derek (8). He holds the rank of second dan (Yi Dan) and, under Grand Master Woo Sup Kim, continues to serve as an assistant instructor for Tiger Kim's Tae Kwon Do.

South West Region:

New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana



By: Ann Candler Harlan
e: SWRegRep@safd.org

CT/FD Jack Young directed *Hamlet* for Promethean Theatre Company (NYC), *Hostages* for Miscreant Theatre Company (NYC), and *The Cherry Orchard* for University of Houston PTTP. He is recruiting for UH's next acting ensemble starting late in January and through early March.

AC Martin Estridge just finished a successful run at the Sydney Short + Sweet Festival, playing the lead role in Peter Holland's backstage comedy drama *All Hail*. The show received the audience award and was runner-up for the judge's award. Later this year, Martin begins work on the independent film *Found Footage*.

FM Mark Guinn is busy at Louisiana Tech University as he closed *Grapes of Wrath* in the fall and is currently working on *Nunsense* and *Seascape* for the Winter Quarter. Spring Quarter will bring the 19th annual Stage Combat Workshop at LaTech and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Check them out; <http://www.latechuniversitytheatre.com/>

AC Ann Candler Harlan was the dance choreographer for a high school production of *Once upon a Mattress* this winter. This will be her last report as the SAFD Southwest Regional Rep, as she's handing the reins over to a new Rep this spring. "Thanks everyone!"

March Madness VII

Stage Combat Workshop

Northern Kentucky University

March 13 and 14, 2010

This year's Dream Team :
(so far)

Michael Chin (SAFD Fight Master)

Michael Johnson (SAFD Fight Director)

Gina Cerimele-Mechley, DC Wright, John Tovar (SAFD Certified Teachers)

Plus More!!!

Past Classes:

Laban Rapier and Dagger, Sneaky Sh*t, Isengard Style Mass Battle, Voice and Violence, Contemporary Violence, Lightsaber, plus basic classes in all 8 SAFD recognized weapons

Workshop Fee: \$200

Fee includes catered breakfasts and lunches, and a t-shirt!

\$175 for SAFD members, union affiliates, students with valid ID OR early registration

\$150 for SAFD members, union affiliates, students with valid ID AND early registration

ALL DISCOUNTED PRICES MUST BE PAID IN FULL BY 3/1/10

Questions? Call 513-295-4788 or email us at cincymarchmadness@yahoo.com

Rumble in the Rockies IX

KUNG FU CRAZY



Saturday, March 27 & Sunday, March 28
2010

DENVER, COLORADO

FEATURING

Geoffrey Kent, Chuck Coyl and Jon Cole

Sponsored By:



Denver Center Theatre Academy
An educational department of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts

REGISTRATION AND MORE INFO
www.rumbleintherockies.com



More *MOVIE MAYHEM* at: **VIRGINIA BEACH BASH 7**

March 27 & 28, 2010

Featuring



**Fight Master
Richard Ryan**
Fight Coordinator
Sherlock Holmes

&



**Fight Master
Dale Girard**
Stunt Coordinator
Eyeborgs

Additional Staff Includes

FD Scot Mann, CT Jacki Armit, CT Michael Kirkland, & CT Gregg Lloyd

Price: \$250.00 for two solid days of instruction (T-Shirt included);
Various union and professional society discounts available.

For complete information, updated instructor list, and intern opportunities, see our Web Site at:

www.regent.edu/beachbash

Or call 757-226-4730



tech theatre players presents


don't stab the actors

the stage combat workshop@louisiana tech university

april 2-3, 2010



<http://www.latechuniversitytheatre.com/pages/stagecombat.html>



THE LINCOLN ASSASSINATION STAGE COMBAT WORKSHOP

JOHNNY CARSON SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND FILM
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - LINCOLN
LINCOLN, NE

APRIL 10TH & 11TH, 2010

\$100 / WEEKEND
TESTING FEES ADDITIONAL

FEATURING CERTIFIED TEACHERS

IAN BORDEN
PAUL STEGER

HARRIS SMITH
D.C. WRIGHT
...AND MORE!

SPTs, SPRs, & CLASSES IN...

WEAPONS AND UNARMED FIGHTING
FOR STAGE AND FILM

GUN SAFETY

POLICE TACTICS

BLOOD EFFECTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
IAN BORDEN - IBORDEN2@UNL.EDU

WWW.LINCOLN-ASSASSINATION-FIGHT.COM

MAY 17 - JUNE 4, 2010

- certified instructors
DC WRIGHT & H. RUSS BROWN
- skill proficiency tests in
knife and quarterstaff
- 10 hours of instruction in
UNARMED, RAPIER & DAGGER & BROADSWORD
- free evening & master classes including:
GROIN SHOTS ARE FUNNY, FIGHTING FOR FILM,
BLOOD AND GUTS, ETC.
- includes automatic enrollment
in UNREHEARSED SHAKESPEARE
- register online at
EUREKA.EDU/STAGECOMBAT

THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS



STAGE COMBAT WORKSHOP

AT EUREKA COLLEGE
& WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

regional workshop sanctioned by SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

2 weeks of hard hitting SPT training
skills tests in UNARMED and SINGLE SWORD

MAY 18-29
2010

The Oregon Knockout is BACK



www.oregonknockout.com



*The Off Square Theatre Company presents Wyoming's first SAFD Sanctioned
Stage Combat Workshop*

TILTIN' IN THE TETONS (aka The TILT)

When: May 29 – 31, 2010

An SAFD Gun Safety Workshop will
also be held May 27 and 28
(Limited to 12 students)

Where: The Center for the Arts in
Jackson, WY

Who: The scheduled Faculty includes:

FD Jason Armit, CT Jacki Blakeney,
FM Michael G. Chin, FM Drew Fracher,
FD Geoff Kent, FD Scot Mann,
FD Michael (MJ) Johnson

Workshop Fees

Three Day Rate: \$300

Daily Rate: \$120

Gun Safety Rate: \$150

All Five Days: \$450

SAFD-Student-Union Three Day Rate: \$270

SAFD-Student-Union Daily Rate: \$100

SAFD-Student-Union Five Day Rate: \$400

For Further Information, and to Register, Contact Michael (MJ) Johnson at:
jjohnsonmichael@ymail.com

Pre-register by April 1, 2010 and get further discount:

Savage Mountain Summer Arts Academy

AT FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Stage Combat Workshop

June 20-26, 2010



CONTACT INFO

Darrell Rushton, Camp Director
301.687.4487 • dsrushton@frostburg.edu
www.frostburg.edu/savagemtn/combatsffighting.htm

A week-long workshop for students interested in learning stage combat and pushing their physical acting skills

Frostburg State University, Frostburg MD

OFFERING CLASSES IN

- UNARMED
- BROADSWORD
- ACTING SHAKESPEARE

Previous instructors include Certified Teacher Darrell Rushton, Cara Rawlings, Craig Lawrence and Sara Hodges

Workshop Ad Requirements:

Please look at the following *Cutting Edge* ad specifications. Sending us your ad in the proper format will ensure that it will be entered in the upcoming issue.

What you put in the ad is entirely up to you, however, the following criteria must be met:

- The workshop must be sanctioned by the SAFD
- The ad must be 7.75" wide by 4.5" high
- The ad must be submitted in either .tif, .jpg, .eps, or .pdf format
- When sending us a file, please include the fonts you use
- We will accept ads up to one year before the date of your workshop

If your ad does not meet the following criteria, your ad will either not be placed in the publication or will be adjusted to specification at the *Cutting Edge* editor's discretion.

We are always available to answer any questions you might have as well as help you through the process. If you have further questions, contact us at:

cuttingedge@safd.org

The Society of American Fight Directors and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts present

The 30th Annual National Stage Combat Workshop

July 5 – July 23, 2010

Introduction to Stage Combat

For high school drama students, educators, collegiate actors, and those interested in a strong foundation of Stage Combat.

Basic Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency

Perfect for college students and professional actors who wish to study and test in Unarmed, Rapier & Dagger and Broadsword.

Advanced Actor Combatant Skills Proficiency

For students seeking additional weapons, advanced techniques and an emphasis on performance. Previous SPT experience is required.

Teacher Certification Workshop

Our intense testing program required for certification as a teacher by the SAFD. Experience in choreography and teaching are essential.

Scholarships available!

Up to 25% off tuition!

For up to date workshop information or to fill out an application please check the SAFD website at

www.safd.org/training/nscw

Come celebrate 30 years of NSCW Stage Combat this summer!

Correction March 5, 2010: The word Discounts was removed from this ad to align with NCSA policy.

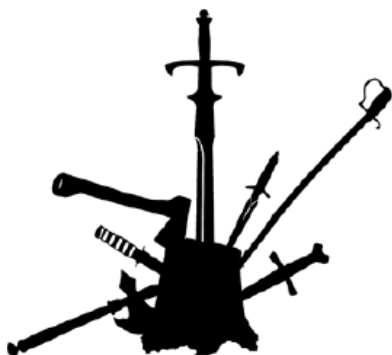
photo by mccormackphotography.com

The Fight Directors Forum Friday, September 3, 2010, 7-9pm

A discussion of the profession of staged combat with a panel of S.A.F.D. Fight Directors, Choreographers and Teachers. Free.

The Texas Intensive Stage Combat Workshop September 4 & 5, 2010, 9am-6:30pm

Classes in SAFD weapon skills plus some instructors' specialties, with a focus on performance principles of staged combat. * Skills Proficiency Renewals (SPR) also available.



The Texas Intensive

Society of American Fight Directors Regional Workshop

At the

School of Theatre & Dance

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Annually on Labor Day Weekend

** Workshop Fee: \$175.00 for the full weekend.*

Space is limited, Pre-registration recommended.

Food and T-shirt included.

10% discount for - S.A.F.D. members - Registration in by August 15th - Or groups of six or more.

** For Registration form or inquiries write to Texas_Intensive-owner@yahoo.com or call 713-419-9321 **

CALL FOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS OF THE CUTTING EDGE!

The Cutting Edge is seeking a new Associate Editor to serve beginning in May 2010. As a bi-monthly publication, *The Cutting Edge* publishes articles, information, and reports for its growing membership and is committed to assisting contributing members through the publication process. We strive to strengthen communication for the SAFD membership and to provide an outlet for the wealth of information they have to share.

Responsibilities for this position may include the following:

- Contacting regional workshop coordinators to obtain advertisements for upcoming workshops, organize who will write the report for the workshop, and assist the writer in completing a detailed report on or before the deadline for the next issue.
- Generating new material, columns, and/or contributing to the existing sections listed with each issue
- Initiating interview articles with the membership such as the *Footlight* and *Spotlight* series
- Collecting information on upcoming SPTs and SPRs across the country

Qualified applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Consistent access to the Internet and email
- An ability to work with MS Word, MS Excel, Adobe Acrobat and some kind of picture preview application
- Have a working knowledge of both Mac and PC applications and software differences
- The ability to produce articles and information in a timely fashion

If you are interested in finding a creative way to become more involved with this great organization please consider applying. This is an opportunity for new members to network and become more familiar with all that the SAFD has to offer. It also provides new ways for long-standing members to give back and affords some the motivation to publish work of their own.

This position is limited to SAFD members and is currently a volunteer opportunity. The search process will begin **APRIL 1, 2010** and all candidates must have sent their information by this date.

To apply, send an updated CV, a cover letter noting qualifications and what you hope to do for *The Cutting Edge*, as well as contact information for three references to Michael Mueller, Editor-in-Chief, at cuttingedge@safd.org or mjmueller3@aol.com. Thank you for considering this great opportunity.

2010 SAFD Membership Application/Annual Dues Form

Please complete the entire form. In order for the SAFD to maintain accurate records, it is important that all of your information in our database be current. You can mail your payment with this form, or you may pay online with a credit card at www.safd.org.

Reasons to join the SAFD:

- ☐ Subscription to **The Fight Master**, a journal published twice yearly
- ☐ Subscription to **The Cutting Edge**, our bimonthly online newsletter
- ☐ Access to back issues of both publications and online discussions in the members only section at www.safd.org
- ☐ Discounts to national and regional stage combat workshops
- ☐ The right to vote for members of the Executive Committee and Governing Body
- ☐ A free gift (Available to new and renewing members)
- ☐ And much, much more...

Status (Check one): ☐ New Member ☐ Current Renewing Member ☐ Lapsed Renewing Member ☐ Gift*

*If giving a membership as a gift, please print your name here _____

Please fill in the information for the gift receiver below.

Amount Enclosed (\$45.00/year USA, \$55.00/year Outside USA) \$ _____ **.00**

Payment Method (check one): ☐ Paid online via Credit Card (please include copy of online receipt) ☐ Paid via enclosed Check Check # _____ ☐ Other _____

General Information

Membership Level (please check one):

☐ Organization ☐ Friend ☐ Actor/Combatant ☐ Advanced Actor/Combatant ☐ Certified Teacher ☐ Fight Director

Name (First, MI, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

Work Address: _____

Materials should be mailed to (please check one):

☐ Home ☐ Work

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Union Affiliations (SAG, AEA, etc.): _____

Please check the following:

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD sanctioned workshops: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding non-sanctioned workshops: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD classes in my area: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD merchandise: ☐ YES ☐ NO

Current Skills Proficiency Test Results (Please list most recent SPT for each weapon)

WEAPON	Month/Year	Instructor	Adjudicator
Broadsword			
Knife			
Quarterstaff			
Rapier & Dagger			
Single Sword			
Smallsword			
Sword & Shield			
Unarmed			

Photocopy & Mail with payment or receipt to: SAFD, 1350 East Flamingo Road #25, Las Vegas, NV. 89119

Word of the Issue:

SEPTIMO

SAFD Definition: A lifted parry of seven that prepares the defender for an immediate riposte into the low line.

Merriam-Webster: séptimo, séptima: Spanish adjective: seventh

FIND THE SAFD ONLINE!

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/safdorg>

Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/SAFDFirearms>

Facebook: “Society of American Fight Directors”



WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN THE SAFD?

Save

If you join on the day of your SPT (skills proficiency test), you join at a 33% discount. Pay only \$30 instead of \$45 for your first year of membership.

Network

Become a member of a close-knit organization within a close-knit industry. We think we're a pretty friendly bunch and we're always happy to meet more new members.

Discounts

Attend future SAFD workshops at a discounted rate. National and regional workshops offer big savings once you're an SAFD member.

Access

Get listed on the new and improved SAFD website that gives you access to member info across the nation. If you move or are working out of town, you'll be able to contact local SAFD members more easily.

Opportunities

The new and improved SAFD website will also allow directors, fight directors, casting directors and other employers an easy way to find you and other qualified fighters in your neck of the woods.